MARVEL COMICS
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Fantastic Four 1996 VS.
DOOM 2099
Thy Kingdom Come...
...to YANCY STREET!
BUSCEMA/PALMIOTTI 96
DIRECT EDITION
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THE COLD OCEAN'S DEPTHS CANNOT TOUCH HIM IN HIS PRESENT STATE...
YET, HE HAS MORE THAN SUFFICIENT CAUSE TO SHIVER!
HE IS DOCTOR STRANGE MASTER SUPREME OF THE MYSTIC ARTS --
-- AND HE HAS SENT HIS ASTRAL FORM INTO NEPTUNE'S BOSOM IN SEARCH OF ONE WHO BELONGS NOT IN THIS TIME!
THE REMNANTS OF THIS RECENTLY DESTROYED ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE PLATFORM ARE RICH WITH THE AURA OF THE TEMPORAL ANOMALY WHICH I RECENTLY DETECTED!*
* SEE DOOM 2099 #40 -- Suzanne!
WHOEVER HE IS, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE SEEKS TO CHANGE A DISTANT FUTURE!
THOUGH I CAN ONLY GUESS AT HIS MOTIVES, I SENSE THAT UNTOLD CATACLYSM WILL SURELY RESULT FROM HIS ACTIONS!

STAN LEE presents
AGAINST TIME
PART 3
BITTER CHOICES
AGONY SINGES THE AIR, AS THROATS ARE SCREAMED RAW, AND SHACKLED LIMBS TRY TO CLAW AT CHEMICALLY-INDUCED NIGHTMARES!
THOUGH EACH PAINED CRY RAZORS THROUGH HIM, THE MAN CALLED DOOM CONTINUES HIS GRUESOME LABORS!
SPECIMEN FOURTEEN IS READY, DORIAN!
WITHDRAW ANOTHER SAMPLE OF HIS BLOOD!
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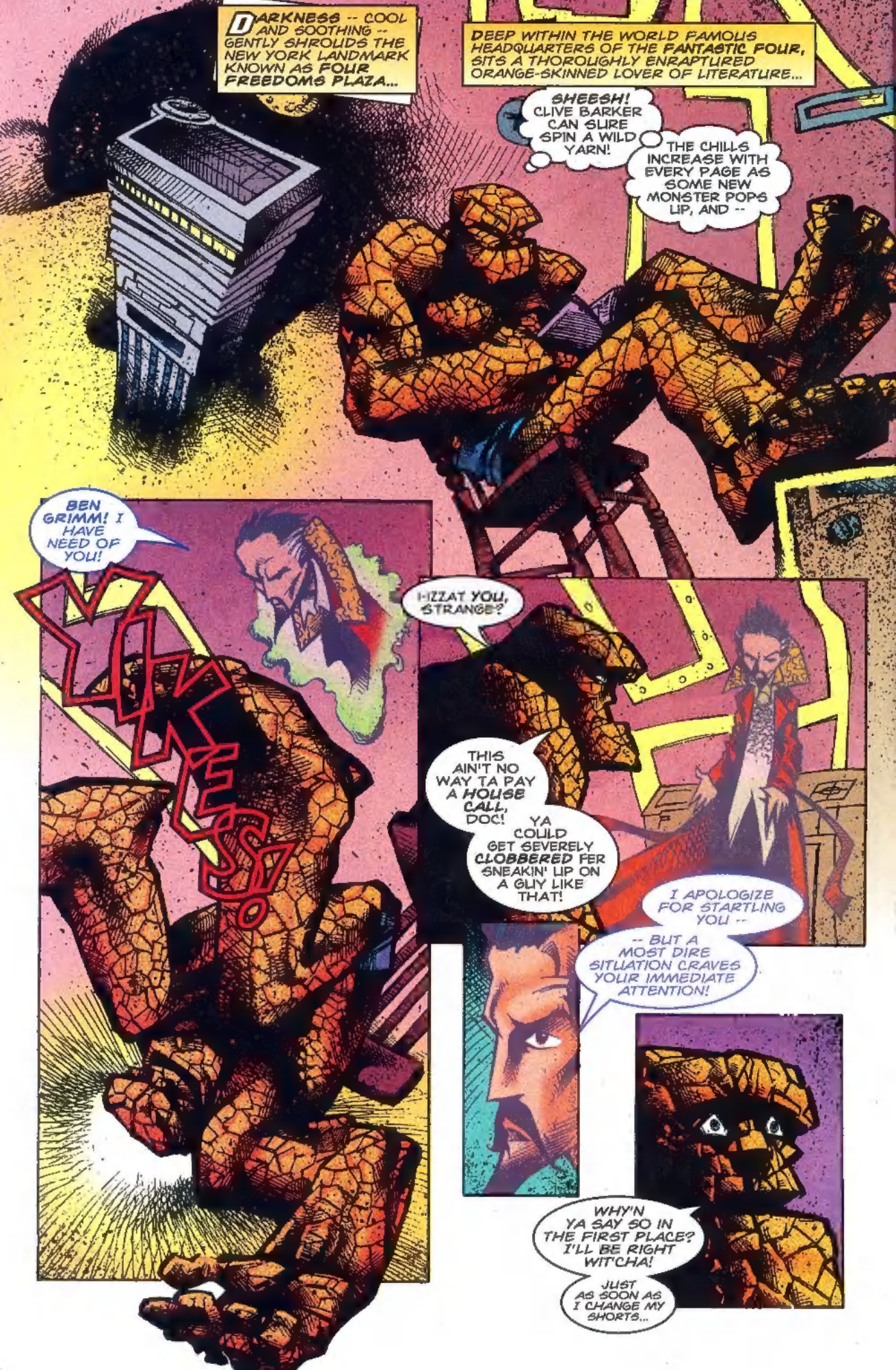
MOVING WITH ALMOST INHUMAN PRECISION, DOOM QUICKLY ANALYZES THE SAMPLE, AND THEN...
EXCELLENT! THE EFFECTS ARE AS ANTICIPATED!
MASTER! I... I... MEAN NO DISRESPECT... BUT THESE PEOPLE ARE FELLOW COUNTRYMEN...
IS THERE NO WAY TO EASE THEIR SUFFERING?!
BE COMFORTED THAT THEIR PERSONAL TORMENTS ARE FOR THE GREATER GOOD!
BY THIER SACRIFICES... SHALL LATVERIA LIVE!
IN A DISTANT FUTURE... THE ENEMIES OF OUR BELOVED HOMELAND... WILL SLAY OUR ENTIRE POPULATION... WITH A RAIN OF LETHAL NECROTOXINS!
"IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO FORESTALL THIS MONUMENTAL TRAGEDY, I JOURNEYED TO THIS ERA VIA AN UNTESTED METHOD OF TIME TRAVEL!
"UNFORTUNATELY, MY ARRIVAL WAS ILL-RECEIVED BY MY PRESENT DAY SELF --
"-- AND I WAS UNSUCCESSFUL IN MY BID TO SECURE HIS AID!

"LINDALINTED, I CONVINCED AN AMERICAN CHEMICAL CORPORATION TO HELP ME COMB THE SEAS FOR A PARTICULAR SUB-SPECIES OF CRAB --
"-- AN ACTION WHICH WAS STRENUOUSLY OPPOSED BY NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER!"
BUT I WOULD NOT BE DETERRED!
THE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE VENOM, PRODUCED BY THOSE SPECIFIC CRABS, MAY PROVE TO BE THE SALVATION OF LATVERIA!
MY EXPERIMENTS INDICATE THAT PROLONGED ADDICTION TO THIS VENOM WILL CAUSE CHANGES ON A GENETIC LEVEL, AND ONE OF THE SIDE-EFFECTS WILL BE --
-- AN IMMUNITY TO NECRO-TOXINS!
IF THAT IS SO, MASTER...
I WILL GLADLY SACRIFICE MYSELF FOR MY COUNTRY!
I FEAR YOUR MOTIVES ARE NOT ENTIRELY SELFLESS, DORIAN!
YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY SAMPLED THIS VENOM, AND ARE ALREADY ENSLAVED BY A HUNGER FOR MORE!

EVEN AS THE STARTLED TEENAGER IS FROZEN BY DOOM'S DAGGER-LIKE GLARE, SOMEWHERE ACROSS TOWN, REPORTER BEN URICH GREETS AND OLD FRIEND...
DAILY BUGLE
GLAD I COULD HELP, BEN!
YOU EVER GOING TO WISE UP, AND QUIT SMOKING?
ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE, DAREDEVIL... ...ALTHOUGH YOU'RE HARDLY A MODEL FOR HEALTHY LIFESTYLES!
MAYBE NOT, BUT MY LUNGS ARE CLEAR!
ANYWAY, BACK TO ALISTAIR... LOOKS LIKE SOME BIG CONSORTIUM'S TAKING OVER!
THANKS TO YOUR RECENT TIP*, THE ALISTAIR CHEMICAL COMPANY WAS TIED DIRECTLY TO THAT MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR ENVIRONMENTAL PLATFORM DISASTER!
THEY'RE EVEN GONNA RENAME THE COMPANY... CALL IT ALCHEMAX!
YOU DIG UP ANYTHING ON THAT DOCTOR DOOM IMPERSONATOR I TOLD YOU ABOUT?
ZILCH!
BUT A FEW MEMBERS OF THE LATVERIAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS HAVE RECENTLY GONE MISSING!
MISSING DIPLOMATS AND SOMEONE DRESSING LIKE DOOM — THERE MUST BE A CONNECTION!
REMEMBER ME IF YOU FIND ONE!
* LAST ISSUE — Suzanne.

ELSEWHERE AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE METAPHYSICAL MANIFESTATION OF DR. STRANGE SLOWLY DRIFTS UPWARD FROM THE EAST RIVER...
THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO LEADS ME BACK TOWARD MANHATTAN!
MY QUARRY HIDES SOMEWHERE WITHIN THIS GREAT CITY!
HIS TRAIL HAS GROWN FAINT, BUT I MUST PRESS ON!
THE THREAT HE POSES IS FAR TOO DANGEROUS TO GO UNCHECKED!
I SENSE THAT HE IS SOMEWHERE NEAR, BUT I AM UNABLE TO PERCEIVE HIS PRECISE LOCATION!
BY THE CRIMSON BANDS OF CYTTORAK! I KNOW THIS NEIGHBORHOOD --!
YANCY ST
WAY
AS IN TIMES PAST, WHEN I CALLED UPON THE SECRET DEFENDERS, I SHALL NEED ASSISTANCE ON THE PHYSICAL PLANE!
AND THERE BE NO BETTER CHOICE...
THAN YANCY STREET'S MOST FAMOUS ALUMNUS!


DARKNESS -- COOL AND SOOTHING -- GENTLY SHROUDS THE NEW YORK LANDMARK KNOWN AS FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA...
DEEP WITHIN THE WORLD FAMOUS HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, SITS A THOROUGHLY ENRAPTURED ORANGE-SKINNED LOVER OF LITERATURE...
SHEESH! CLIVE BARKER CAN SURE SPIN A WILD YARN!
THE CHILLS INCREASE WITH EVERY PAGE AS SOME NEW MONSTER POPS UP, AND --
BEN GRIMM! I HAVE NEED OF YOU!
YKESS!
HIZZAT YOU, STRANGE?
THIS AIN'T NO WAY TA PAY A HOUSE CALL, DOC!
YA COULD GET SEVERELY CLOBBERED FER SNEAKIN' UP ON A GUY LIKE THAT!
I APOLOGIZE FOR STARTLING YOU --
-- BUT A MOST DIRE SITUATION CRAVES YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION!
WHY'N YA SAY SO IN THE FIRST PLACE? I'LL BE RIGHT WIT'CHA!
JUST AS SOON AS I CHANGE MY SHORTS...

MEANWHILE...
OKAY, DD! YOU DON'T HAVE MANY LEADS TO TRACK DOWN THE MAN WHO'S MASQUERADING AS DOCTOR DOOM!
ALL YOU KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT HE HAS A SPECIAL INTEREST IN A PARTICULAR BREED OF CRAB!
A CRAB WHICH PRODUCES A HIGHLY ADDICTIVE AND AROMATIC VENOM!
NOT MUCH TO GO ON, BUT YOU'VE SUCCEEDED WITH LESS!
GOTCHA!
RELAXING, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR CLEARS HIS MIND OF ALL DISTRACTIONS...
BLINDED BY A RADIOACTIVE CANISTER WHILE STILL A TEENAGER, HIS REMAINING SENSES BECAME AMPLIFIED TO SUPERHUMAN LEVELS...
SURRENDERING FULLY TO HIS SENSE OF SMELL, HE BEGINS TO CONCENTRATE...
QUICKLY FILTERING OUT THE HARSH TRAFFIC ODORS, THE POLLUTED SKIES AND WASTE-FILLED SEWERS...
IGNORING THE AIRBORNE DELIGHTS OF SWEET DELICACIES, SUBTLE PERFUMES, AND ZESTY SPICES...
HE STRAINS, SEARCHING FOR ONE PARTICULAR SCENT HIDDEN AMONG THOUSANDS...
AND THEN, LONG AFTER OTHERS WOULD HAVE ABANDONED HOPE, HE SMILES!

AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT, A MASSIVE FIGURE CASUALLY STROLLS DOWN YANCY STREET, SEEMINGLY ENGAGED IN A SPIRITED CONVERSATION WITH --
-- HIMSELF?!
A PRIEST, A SHAMAN AND A WHAT?!
NO OFFENSE, DOC, BUT YA AIN'T NO JERRY SEINFELD!
WE BETTER GIT TA WORK BEFORE THE NET PATROL HAULS ME OFF FER TALKIN' TA MY IMAGINARY PLAYMATE!
YA PICKIN' UP ANY VIBES, YET?
I SENSE MANY MINDS IN PSYCHIC UPHEAVAL --
-- AND IN THEIR THOUGHTS IS ONE WHO DRESSED IN ARMOR!
ARMOR?
ARMOR?!
DOCTOR DOOM WUS EXPERIMENTIN' ON THE LOCALS AWHILE BACK!*
IF HE'S SOMEHOW INVOLVED WIT' YER TIME TRAMP, I GOT A HUNCH WHERE WE'LL FIND 'EM!
* It HAPPENED IN FANTASTIC FOUR #361 -- Suzanne
EVEN AS THE EVER-LOVIN' THING POURS ON THE SPEED, DAREDEVIL REACHES HIS OWN DESTINATION...
THIS FACTORY MAY APPEAR DESERTED --
-- BUT I CAN HEAR OVER A DOZEN HEARTBEATS INSIDE!

I EXPERIMENT ON UNWILLING SUBJECTS...
YET, I REFUSE TO INDULGE DORIAN!
THE PATH I HAVE CHOSEN IS FULL OF THORNS --
-- AND CRISSCROSSED BY MEANDERING TRAILS WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IS TO CONFUSE AND DISTRACT!
I VIEW WITH ABHORRENCE THE THOUGHT OF ENSLAVING MY PEOPLE TO A DRUG, EVEN ONE WHICH WILL PRESERVE THE LIVES OF THEIR DESCENDANTS BUT I DARE NOT -- WHAT IS THIS?!
DORIAN! THE MONITOR INDICATES THAT OUR SECURITY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED!
I SHALL ATTEND TO THE INTRUDERS --
-- WHILE YOU GUARD OUR CRAB VENOM WITH YOUR LIFE!
AYE, MASTER...
WITH MY LIFE.

GUIDED UNERRINGLY BY HIS UNCANNY RADAR SENSE, DAREDEVIL SURREPTITIOUSLY ENTERS THE FACTORY...
THIS PLACE IS ALREADY FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS!
THE SMELL OF DUST AND WALL MOLD TELLS ME IT HASN'T [redacted] MUCH USE OVER THE YEARS --
-- BUT SOMEONE THINKS ENOUGH OF IT TO INSTALL SURVEILLANCE DEVICES WHICH ARE DEFINITELY STATE-OF- THE-ART!
IT'S A PRETTY SAFE BET THAT I'VE ALREADY [redacted] DETECTED, BUT --
YOU [redacted] TRESPASSING, DAREDEVIL! THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY, AND YOU HAVE NO [redacted] HERE!
LUCKY ME! I WON MY BET!
THAT HAUGHTY TONE! THE DISTINCTIVE HEARTBEAT --!
IT'S DOCTOR DOOM!
BUT SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT ABOUT HIM! FROM THE MUTED SOUNDS COMING FROM HIS ARMOR, HE'S OBVIOUSLY GIVEN IT A DRASTIC UPGRADE --
-- AND HIS RESPIRATION SEEMS SLOWER!

MACHINERY IS SUDDENLY WHIRLING ABOVE ME --
-- AND I REALLY DOUBT IT WAS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE MY QUALITY OF LIFE!
INCREDIBLE! YOUR REFLEXES [redacted] AS IMPRESSIVE AS [redacted] --
-- BUT I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW YOU MANAGED TO AVOID THOSE NERVE-BLASTS!
YOU'D BE SURPRISED WHAT A MAN CAN ACCOMPLISH WHEN HIS HEART IS PURE --
-- AND HIS HEARING IS HYPER-SENSITIVE!
YOU'RE THE ANSWER [redacted], DOOM! TELL ME ABOUT THOSE MISSING LATVERIANS!
FORGET THEM! SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN GRANTED A RARE PRIVILEGE --
-- TO DIE IN THE SERVICE OF OUR BELOVED COUNTRY!
IT IS AN HONOR YOU SHALL SOON SHARE!

AS MUCH AS I'M SURE OL'HORNHEAD APPRECIATES YER OFFER --
WE'LL MAKE IT PASS!
HE'S ALREADY AGREED TA HELP ME TACKLE A CERTAIN TIN-SUITED STOOGE!
THE THING?
THOUGH YOUR ARRIVAL WAS NOT ANTICIPATED, I [redacted]OT ALLOW YOU TO DISRUPT MY PLANS!
YOU MAY NOT HAVE MUCH CHOICE, BUSTER!
WAY TO GO, DD! YA USED MY DIVERSION TA BREAK FREE!
NICE OF YOU TO NOTICE!
MAYBE I CAN EVEN RETURN THE FAVOR--

-- BY USING MY BILLY CLUB TO GIFT-WRAP THIS PACKAGE FOR YOU!
GUIDED BY THE SOUND OF HIS BREATHING, I COULN'T MISS IF I TRIED!
YOU INSANE, DAREDEVIL?!
DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE THIS PITIFUL CABLE CAN IMPRISON DOOM?!
DON'T GIT YER STEEL-PLATED PANTIES IN AN UPROAR, PAL!
IT WUZ ONLY MEANT TA HOLD YA LONG ENUFF FER ME TA CLUE THE PAPPARAZZI BECAUSE --
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
YOU IGNORANT BARBARIAN! YOUR MISPLACED ALTRUISM ONLY CONDEMNS THE PEOPLE OF LATVERIA!

MEANWHILE, NOT FAR AWAY...
THIS EQUIPMENT! THESE PEOPLE! THEY HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER BY HE WHO WOULD CHANGE TIME ITSELF!
THE CRITICAL JUNCTURE IS FAST APPROACHING!
THE MOMENT WHICH WILL DECIDE HIS SUCCESS OR FAILURE!
AND THIS VAT OF UNKNOWN CHEMICALS WILL PIVOTAL IN THE DECIDING INSTANT!
BEHOLD! A FIGURE LIES SPRAWLED BEFORE THE VAT! HIS MIND IS LOST AMID A KALEIDOSCOPE OF DRUG-INDUCED IMAGES!
HE HAS OBVIOUSLY PARTAKEN OF SOME HIGHLY HALLUCINOGENIC SUBSTANCE!

EVEN AS THE ASTRAL FORM OF DOCTOR STRANGE HOVERS ABOVE YOUNG DORIAN, THE THING ALSO PAUSES --!
WHADAYA MEAN YER PEOPLE ARE IN DANGER?!
BE ADVISED, BRAINLESS ONE! THEY SHALL BE SAVED --
-- BY THE HAND OF DOOM!
ARRGH!
THE VERY SAME HAND WHICH SHALL PROVE YOUR UNDOING!
YOU BLUNDERING NEANDERTHAL! YOUR BRUTISH STRENGTH WAS NEVER A MATCH FOR MY SUPERIOR INTELLECT!
SOUNDS LIKE THE THING COULD USE AN ASSIST -- WAIT!
HIS HEARTBEAT IS STEADY! HE'S ONLY PLAYING POSSUM!
I TAKE NO SATISFACTION IN YOUR DEFEAT, GRIMM! I STRIKE NOT FOR MYSELF --
-- BUT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE LATVERIAN PEOPLE!

SUMTHIN'S DIFFERENT ABOUT YA, PAL --
-- AND I AIN'T JUST TALKIN' ABOUT YER FANCY [redacted] LINDEROOS!
I AIN'T EVEN CERTAIN YER THE GENUINE ARTICLE!
YA COULD [redacted] A ROBOT, A FAKE, OR EVEN ONE A HYPERSTORM'S LACKEYS [redacted] ALL I KNOW!
ONLY ONE THING'S FOR SURE --
-- YER GOIN' DOWN!
SO! IT WASN'T MY IMAGINATION! THE THING ALSO PICKED UP ON THE SUBTLE DEVIATIONS BETWEEN THIS MAN AND THE REAL DOCTOR DOOM!

WHA -- WHAT IS THIS PLACE?!
SOME KIND 'A SECRET LAB?!
YA METAL-COVERED MANIAC!
YA BEEN CONDUCTIN' HUMAN EXPERI-MENTS!
INDEED! AND, AS REPUGNANT AS I MAY PERSONALLY FIND THEM, BE ASSURED THAT THEY WERE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY --
-- AS NECESSARY AS THESE VOLTS OF PURE ELECTRICITY WHICH ARE BEING GENERATED BY MY BATTLE ARMOR!
EEY!
THE CRITICAL MOMENT IS ALMOST HERE, BUT ONLY THE THING CAN PERCEIVE MY PRESENCE --!
MAKE NO MOVE, ADVENTURER!
AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE, I WILL REDUCE THIS BOISTEROUS BUFFOON INTO AN ORANGE-SKINNED CINDER!

STOP STRUGGLING, YOU BESTIAL FOOL. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO CAUSE YOU ANY GREATER AGONY!
I MERELY WISH TO SECURE THE CONTENTS OF MY PRECIOUS VAT, AND BE ON MY WAY!
F-FORGET IT, CHARLIE! I DON'T KNOW WHY YA WANT THAT JUNK --
-- BUT IT CAN'T BE FER ANY GOOD!
AT LAST! THE CRITICAL JUNCTURE HAS ARRIVED!
IF BEN GRIMM WOULD SAVE THE FUTURE, HE MUST ACT NOW!
POUR ON THE JUICE, DOOMSIE --
-- OR WHOEVER YA REALLY ARE --
YA AIN'T GOT ENUFF POWER IN THAT BLASTED ARMORED ARMANI TA STOP THIS IDOL 'A MILLIONS!
IF YA REALLY WANT WHATEVER'S IN THAT BLASTED VAT -- BE MY GUEST!
NOOOO!

HURRY, THING --! THAT EXPLOSION IS CAUSING A MASSIVE CHAIN REACTION!
I READ YA LOUD'N' CLEAR, STRANGE!
STRANGE?!
WHO'S STRANGE?!
IT'S A LITTLE COMPLICATED TA EXPLAIN, HORNHEAD... BUT I'LL UPDATE YA AFTER WE'VE FREED THESE POOR DEVILS!
NO ARGUMENT! BUT THEY'RE IN PRETTY SAD SHAPE!
THEY'LL NEVER MAKE IT OUT UNDER THEIR OWN POWER!
THEY WON'T HAFTA! NOT WHILE THERE'S A PAIR 'A CARD-CARRYING HERO TYPES ON THE SCENE!
MOVE IT! I CAN DETECT THE HEAT RISING RAPIDLY!
ONLY MERE SECONDS REMAIN BEFORE THIS ENTIRE BUILDING --
"-- GOES BYE-BYE!"
WHEW WE BARELY MADE IT!
WHAT ABOUT THAT DOC DOOM WANNABEE?!
WHERE'D HE GO IN ALL THE CONFUSION?!

I CAN NO LONGER SENSE HIS PRESENCE --
-- AND THE MENACE TO THE TIMESTREAM APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN AVERTED!
SWELL! BUT I STILL WANNA KNOW WHAT'S GONNA BECOME'A ALLA THESE PEOPLE HE PLAYED MAD SCIENTIST ON!
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD? THEY'VE BEEN CLAIMED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THEIR EMBASSY!
OUR SUBJECTS HAVE ALL BEEN RETURNED, SIRE!
THEY'RE ALL BEING RETURNED TO LATVERIA FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT?
LATVERIA?!
THAT DOESN'T EXACTLY FILL ME WIT' CONFIDENCE!
FROM INITIAL REPORTS, THEIR TORMENTOR APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN A MADMAN WHO WAS DISGUISED AS YOU!
ME?!
YOU MAY GO NOW, BUT KEEP ME ADVISED OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS!

YOUR DOPPELGANGER FROM THE FUTURE APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN NEW YORK!
LET HIM ENJOY HIS LAST REMAINING HOURS OF FREEDOM —
"-- BECAUSE, ALL TOO SOON, WE SHALL REDUCE THOSE HOURS TO MERE MOMENTS!"
THOUGH MY VENOM HAS BEEN DESTROYED, AND THE CRABS WHICH PRODUCED IT ARE NOW EXTINCT... VICTORY SHALL YET BE MINE!
THE SAMPLE OF VENOM WHICH I STILL POSSESS CAN BE ANALYZED, AND ARTIFICIALLY REPRODUCED!
WHATEVER I MAY THINK OF REED RICHARDS AS A MAN OR A SCIENTIST --
-- I HAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE REQUIRED EQUIPMENT CAN BE FOUND IN FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA!
TO ENTER THE HEADQUARTERS OF MY GREATEST ENEMIES, MAY SEEM LIKE PURE MADNESS... BUT MY CHOICES ARE SEVERELY LIMITED!
I MUST HURRY BEFORE MY SAMPLE IS LOST! THE SAMPLE WHICH FATE FORCED ME TO INGEST FOR THE SAKE OF MY PEOPLE!
THE SAMPLE WHICH EVEN NOW FLOWS THROUGH MY BLOODSTREAM, AND IGNITES A HUNGER FOR MORE!
HANG ON, FAITHFUL ONE! THE TENSION MOUNTS, THE THRILLS EXPAND, AND THE ACTION CONTINUES IN FANTASTIC FOUR #413! MISS IT NOT!